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TEACHING TUESDAY

OHARA HADAKA MATSURI

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The Ohara Hadaka Matsuri (大原はだか祭り), also known as the Ohara Naked Festival, doesn't really involve full nudity. Held in late September in Chiba Prefecture, the Ohara Hadaka Matsuri has a history stretching back 300 years and is used to pray for a bumper crop harvest and good fishing catch.

The highlight of the Ohara Hadaka Matsuri is the *shiofumi* procession. Local residents strip down to a type of pants known as *momohiki*, then carry several mikoshi shrines down to the sea, where they energetically wade in and take the mikoshi out into the waves. The *shiofumi* is followed by the *owakareshiki*, or farewell to the gods, when the participants carry the mikoshi back through the streets and run in circle through the grounds of the local school cheering. The festival concludes with the mikoshi being lit up with lanterns, traditional displays of music and dance, and a fireworks display.

Although it is translated as "Naked Festival," the Ohara Hadaka Matsuri is a part of a larger tradition of Hadaka Matsuri around Japan, in which participants wear a minimum amount of clothing but are rarely completely naked.